



What is chronic pain?

When you have pain in the same area for a long time or you have a pain that keeps coming back it is called chronic pain. You may have chronic pain if:

- You have pain that lasts for more than three months.
- You get sick and your pain lasts longer than your health care provider says it should.
- Your pain is caused by an illness that does not go away.
- Your pain keeps coming back for months or years.

What causes chronic pain?

When you get sick, hurt or have a health problem, the nerves in your body may change. Your nerves may keep telling your brain there is pain, even after you have healed. You may feel pain more often than you did before or it may hurt worse.

How do I know if I have chronic pain?

You should talk with your health care provider if you think you have chronic pain. Your provider will ask you questions about your pain. Your provider may ask you:

- Where does it hurt and when?
- How long and how bad does it hurt?
- Does your pain come and go or is it there all the time?
- What does your pain feel like?
Does it feel sharp, dull, burning, stabbing or do you feel pressure?
- What makes your pain better?
- What makes your pain worse?



What can be done to help my chronic pain?

There are many ways to treat your chronic pain. Your provider may have you see other providers who:

- Treat pain.
- Treat depression or anxiety, since these problems make pain worse.
- Help you stretch and get stronger in the area with pain.

Your provider may also talk to you about other ways to help your pain. Your provider or the Nurse First Program nurse can tell you more about each of the following things and how they might help your pain:

- Applying heat or cold to the painful area.
- Water exercise in swimming pools, hot tubs or whirlpools.
- Massage
- Acupuncture
- Hypnosis
- Biofeedback
- Meditation

Medicaid may not pay for these types of pain therapies.

Your provider may also give you medicine to help with your pain. Take your medicine just how your provider tells you. And be sure to keep all your appointments so your provider can help you.

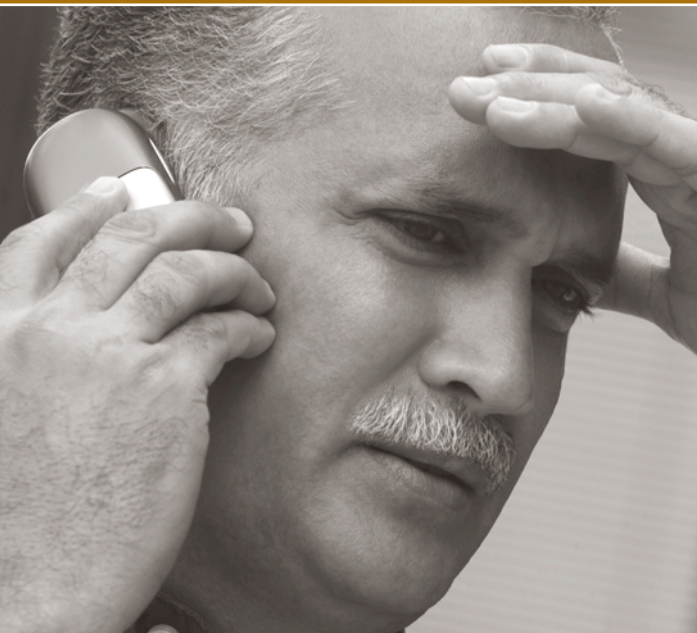
How long will my pain last?

Your pain may go away slowly over many weeks or months. The help you get for your chronic pain may not get rid of all your pain. But it should make it easier for you to enjoy life.

Call the Nurse First Chronic Pain Program at **1-800-330-7847** anytime you are sick or hurt. The nurses are there 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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Understanding Chronic Pain



The Nurse First
Chronic Pain Program

Montana Medicaid

